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ABSTRACT

The four papers in this collection consider the attitudes, concepts, and techniques involved in marketing for non-profit organizations, and explore how librarians in higher education can use these ideas to optimize the effectiveness of their service provision in a time of economic constraint. In "Marketing the Academic Library," Elizabeth Esteve-Coll discusses some underlying principles tested by her own practice, and stresses the broader social, cultural, and educational context that should inform marketing decisions. In "Surveying the User and User Studies," Colin Harris offers a critique of some tested methods of user investigation applicable in the marketing context. In "Preparing a Marketing Plan," Jack D. Cairns offers a case study that highlights the complex issues underlying a marketing approach: a demand for a combination of planning and directing skills, a facility for mastering detail, and an ability to respond to change. Finally, Blaise Cronin's "Improving Your IQ Innovation Quotient," returns to a discussion of principles including questions of mission, market, and resource analysis. (THC)

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INFORMATION AND LIBRARY MANAGER

Editor. . . .Dr Stephen Roberts

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SPECIAL ISSUE

Library Association

Colleges of Further and Higher Education Group

Marketing Strategies for the Academic Library

Papers from a one day conference organised by the Group's London and South East Circle

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INTRODUCTION

This issue of *Information and Library Manager* publishes the papers delivered at a one-day conference organised by the London and South East Circle of the Library Association's Colleges of Further and Higher Education group (CoFHE), and held at the English-Speaking Union in London in June 1985. The theme of 'Marketing Strategies for the academic library' was an appropriate one for the group to consider since its chief concern is the promotion of the highest possible standards of library service and provision in the institutions its members represent. The aim of the conference was to consider the attitudes, concepts and techniques involved in marketing for non-profit making organisations, and to explore how librarians in further and higher education can use these to optimise the effectiveness of their service provision in a time of economic constraint. It is highly appropriate to have been able to publish these papers in *ILM* since marketing and promotion methods are a core issue for managers of service organisations like libraries. Elizabeth Esteve-Coll sets the scene clearly by discussing some underlying principles tested by her own practice, and stresses the broader social, cultural and educational context that should inform marketing decisions. Marketing initiatives have their practical side too including the collection of a variety of management information and user data; Colin Harris offers a critique of some well-tried methods of user investigation, applicable in the marketing context but which still must be used with sensitivity and caution in order not to mislead. Jack Cairns continues a practical theme with a sequenced discussion of the preparation of a marketing plan; in his case study of Southtek public and private sector, and commercial and not-for-profit considerations are evident. The discussion in this paper highlights the complex of issues underlying a marketing approach, which need to combine skills in planning and directing with a facility for mastering practical detail and an ability to respond to change even within the plan. Blaise Cronin's paper returns to a discussion of principles provided with a harder analytical edge; his questions of mission, market and resource analysis cannot be bluffed by the aspirant marketing manager in an academic library. There can be no stock recipe for marketing success in an academic library, but the four papers presented here provide proverbial food for thought and stimulated discussion on the day; if they inspire other librarians to reflect on the matters, provoke action or invite further written contributions to the debate something positive will have been achieved.

Stephen A. Roberts
Editor

MARKETING AND THE ACADEMIC LIBRARY

Elizabeth Esteve-Coll

For a long time the view has prevailed among academic libraries that the mere fact of their existence is sufficient justification for their continued funding and protection by their parent institution — but times have changed.

Since the swingeing cuts imposed on universities by the University Grants Committee in 1981, following on the merger and closures of colleges during the seventies and the continuing financial difficulties of many polytechnics, governing bodies have been encouraged to take a hard look at their libraries. Very frequently, the library budget for staff, equipment, operating costs and purchase grant is the single largest item on an institution's budget. Two questions are inevitably being asked, 'Do we get value for money? Are there other ways of achieving the educational provision traditionally associated with the library?'

Whilst these questions are being posed within an institution, they are merely local reactions to the questions posed by government about the wider role, cost and effectiveness of higher education — and not only by government. It should be remembered that, when a number of colleges were closed in the seventies and again when the UGC cuts were announced, there was no national upsurge of support for education — protest there was, but mostly emanating from areas of vested interest. The community at large scarcely commented — indeed probably scarcely cared. Some universities could have been closed — indeed may yet be closed — but the public will to prevent this occurence was, and probably still is, demonstrably missing.

The reasons underlying this public attitude are complex and go back deep into the structure of English society. The student unrest of the sixties became yet another contributory factor to the continuing distrust and indifference to the fate of higher education in this country. Even today students are all too often regarded as privileged and their teaching staff as a cushioned elite with infinite holiday and little responsibility. These might be, to us, unacceptable generalisations, but they do tend to be the view of the man on the Clapham omnibus.

It is the realisation of the extent of this public indifference and the resultant perception of the isolation of higher education from the mainstream of public concern which has prompted many colleges and universities to make serious attempts to become more deeply rooted in their local communities. It is a phenomenon of the last three years that there has been a rapid development of 'Alumni associations', 'Friends of the University' and joint 'Town and Gown' committees. Colleges and universities spend time and money entertaining Local Authority representatives. There are receptions for the Mayor and elected members, lunches for local government officials, — accompanied by tours of the institution — and there are frantic attempts to interest the local press, radio and television in academic life.

At long last, therefore, there has been a recognition by the majority of academics that higher education can no longer exist in a vacuum. The ivory tower isolationism of the past must give way to closer relationships with, and integration into, the local community. Issues such as 'Continuing Education', 'The University of the Third Age', 'Open Learning', 'First Start', post-experience courses and wholesale re-training facilities are forcing the speed of this

integration process. Some institutions are achieving more spectacular results than others. But the salient point to note is that virtually every academic institution is, to a greater or lesser degree, involved in closing the gap.

Where do academic libraries stand in this development?

The academic library has traditionally served only the staff and students of its own institution. In some instances, because this relationship was a monopoly, i.e. the library had no competitors, there was a tendency to perpetuate out-moded practices and to allow the momentum of inertia to govern the service offered to users. All this has been changed dramatically in the past few years. Indeed, in many instances, the library has been at the forefront in the adoption of computerisation for its requirements and in anticipating user-needs by the development of new services.

But, because academic libraries serve a captive client-group and, despite the fact that librarianship is a service industry, the crucial commercial ingredient of competition is missing.

The circumstance of operating in a market environment without competition is inhibiting to progress and to the development of a marketing attitude. Is this circumstance, however, sufficient reason to eschew the philosophy and methods so successfully developed in industry for market success — for customer satisfaction? Because marketing terminology does not fit, is there a reluctance among academic librarians to accept the underlying principles of marketing?

Librarians talk about users, industry talks about the customer. We, as librarians, talk about service, both in a general and a particular sense. Industry talks about the product. There is a clear sense in which we could regard an inter-library loan or a literature search as a product. It is what our particular customer wants — it is what our particular service supplies. But there is another sense in which libraries can be seen as essentially different from other service industries and which affects our attitude to marketing — libraries do not make a charge for their services. This makes us a unique service industry, in a privileged and, at the same time, highly vulnerable position, with no profits to consider and no competitors to beat.

But, what we have so far assiduously avoided is any consideration of continued survival, of public accountability and of public esteem. We can no longer afford to operate in a vacuum, either within our own institutions or within the wider community.

Is marketing a potential solution to some of the problems facing academic libraries in the next decade? I believe that it is.

Marketing may well be a term which is alien to librarians, smacking, as it so often does, of high pressure salemanship, distribution targets and profit margins. Let us stop for a moment and ask if that is actually what modern management means when it refers to marketing.

Unfortunately there is a great deal of confusion in the minds of many people as to what exactly the difference is between selling and marketing. Many people think that the terms are synonymous and regularly interchange them in conversation. Far from being interchangeable terms they are actually opposites. The concept of selling presupposes that one has got a product to sell and it is the process of persuading people to buy that product by various methods which embodies the concept of salesmanship.

However, the concept of marketing starts from the premise that a company actively re-

searches customer requirements and *then* tries to develop a product which will satisfy those requirements. This is embodied in the definition of marketing which is today most widely accepted — that of the Institute of Marketing. It is 'The management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying customer requirements profitably'.

As managers of non-commercial services, librarians have difficulty in accepting this definition as it stands. For us, the concept of social profit is fundamental to our perception of our role in society. However, when we add this concept to the Institute of Marketing's definition, so that the dimension of user benefit is added to that of satisfying user requirement, we begin to see that there is a relevance factor. Marketing is a corporate strategy for focusing the attention of a whole company or service on customer or user needs. We need to consider how much of the marketing philosophy and techniques currently used in industry are relevant to us, how much can be adapted and used in librarianship.

Typical marketing slogans like 'customer satisfaction must be the main criterion of an effective business' can easily be translated into an operational philosophy for us — 'user satisfaction must be the main criterion of an effective library service'. After all, if there were no students, none of us would have jobs. So our prime responsibility as library managers is to our users.

However, only by acknowledging a parallel responsibility to our own staff, to motivate them, to communicate with them and give them responsibility for interpreting the service's corporate image to the user can a marketing philosophy be translated into action.

A library is not an abstraction. It has an identity, an identity created by the staff contact with the users. The quality of the library service is judged by the user's perception of an individual member of staff. For that individual user the particular member of staff who deals with his/her enquiry does not merely represent the library — he or she *is* the library.

Time and again I have been stopped on campus, in corridors and car parks, by a member of the academic staff who will comment, 'You have a marvellous library — Peter/Helen/John has just done an excellent literature search for me.' This is a frequent and classic example of the sum of the parts equalling the whole. For the user, the library is a multiplicity of such individual transactions.

How then do we translate marketing into an operational strategy for academic libraries?

Our first and foremost consideration must be for our own institution. We must understand its character and be responsive to its changing needs. This involves us in analysing the needs of the users, not only in the traditional manner, by issuing questionnaires, but also by observation of user habits, by sampling and by interviews. It has been accepted practice in public libraries now for some time to draw up community profiles, examining the social, demographic, economic and cultural characteristics of a given geographical locality. How many academic libraries have seriously attempted to draw up such a profile of its users? Because we serve a 'captive' clientele we believe we know its characteristics. But do we? If we pause for a moment to examine some of the identifiable groups now emerging amongst our users, you will see just how complex a profile already exists, and it will certainly become more complex over the next decade.

Traditionally, in a university, one had three groups of users, undergraduates, post-graduates and staff. Now there are several sub-divisions of all three groups.

Undergraduates can be divided into

a) Full-time

b) Part-time
c) Overseas students
d) Mature students
e) Sandwich course students
Thick sandwich/Thin sandwich
f) Adult and Continuing Education students

Post-graduates can be divided into

a) Full-time
b) Part-time
c) Overseas students
d) Post-experience students
e) Research students (i.e. not taught courses)
f) Distance learning students

In the same way, the definition of 'staff' has expanded from solely academic and administrative to cover not only visiting research staff but staff associated with industrial consultancy projects, Innovation Centres and Research Parks.

I have only listed the most obvious sub-divisions which are common in universities. In polytechnics and colleges many of the same sub-divisions exist, with the added complications created by Open Learning schemes, MSC projects, MEP work and First Start. Each of these groups has particular requirements which need to be analysed and for which, in some cases, individual responses must be made.

Once the identification of the separate user groups within the institution has been made, the library needs to ascertain their service requirements.

It is not always easy to get at this information. Some of it will emerge in discussion with staff and students, but a lot of it will only be obtained through close analysis of course material, teaching methods and observation of user habits. The user rarely knows or guesses at the full range of services which an academic library has to offer, especially a library which has introduced computerisation and on-line searching. This fact should be borne in mind. The user tends to articulate what is known and familiar. It is up to the librarian to offer extensions of the learning experience and to create new opportunities for service.

I mentioned earlier the use of questionnaires in determining user requirements. A well designed user survey can throw up a mass of very useful information, either confirming or negating trends already suspected. It is helpful, if designing a questionnaire for this purpose, to get the advice and assistance of any social statisticians in the institution, as well as the computer unit. A well thought-out survey, asking the right questions, in the right way, with the results analysed by computer, can save a lot of time, as well as false starts.

Observation of user habits in the library, by the use of television cameras to record movement and frequency of activity, could be another way of learning what people need.

But by far the most successful method of gaining an insight into user needs is practical observation by the library staff. If the whole library staff is closely involved in all aspects of the service; if the library staff understand the aims and objectives of a corporate marketing

strategy, and are in sympathy with it, then the exchange of information about particular aspects of user behaviour can be invaluable. A total pattern can be created by a judicious use of all the possible approaches available.

The range of uses to which this information can be put is enormous. For example, observation of patterns of activity could lead to a rearrangement of the physical layout of the stock and seating arrangements; to the creation of a self-service, as opposed to a serviced, short loan collection; to the reorganisation of bibliographical material; to the creation of separate sections within the library for particular types of materials or, on the other hand, to the complete integration of all types of material into a single sequence. The range of options is vast; it is for the librarian to choose those which are appropriate to his particular institution.

The widespread introduction of computerised issue systems and computerised cataloguing means that we are becoming more able to match stock to users. Some of the early results of such matching have thrown up the worrying fact, previously suspected but incapable of being tested in detail, that students of foreign languages tend to read more of their core material in English than in the language of their chosen course. Other examples of the library's ability to adjust to user needs, resulting from analysis of computer data, are changes in opening hours, more flexible loan conditions and different levels of loan period for different categories of user.

Many years ago, observation of user habits and sample interviews made me aware that science and technology students sought, and failed to find, good recreational reading in the library where I then worked. The creation of a separate category of recreational reading largely served to redress this deficiency.

Eye-catching displays of particular sections of the stock can alert users to unfamiliar areas of the library, particularly if they can be related to, say, an aspect of student activity, for example, a student union industrial archaeology society, or to an institutional innovation, for example, Surrey University's development of academic courses in Dance, or to an institutional achievement, for example, the launching of the same university's educational satellite. Areas of topical interest can be highlighted for research staff in much the same way.

A continuing involvement by all the library staff in the life of the institution is an essential aspect of marketing the library. Library staff should, from time to time, attend undergraduate lectures, open lectures and postgraduate seminars. Members of the academic staff should be regularly invited to discuss their work with library staff. This formal interchange of information then needs to be properly related to the library's internal communication system, so that information obtained by the individual can be disseminated to the whole staff. Information interchange is a key element in good marketing and it is essential to recognise that both formal *and* informal contacts on the campus need to be channelled into the library's market orientation.

I began by saying that higher education could no longer remain isolated from its local community and that this fact is now being recognised. Nevertheless, it is worrying to note that whilst institutionally the need for community outreach is recognised, many academic libraries have actually created obstacles for outsiders who seek library access. The funding difficulties which have manifested themselves so acutely in the last three years, have led to a whole range of attempts to generate income in libraries. All too often, however, the administrative effort needed to create such income has been of an order which almost negates the resultant funds raised.

One favoured course of action for creating income in academic libraries has been to introduce

charges for external users — some libraries even charge Open University students for loan privileges. Whilst charging local industry for borrowing rights and literature searching can be defended on grounds of the relationship between the level of demand made and the final commercial destination of the information, surely it is quite a different matter to make a charge to individual citizens. Contrast this position with the widespread practice in the United States, where the production of your driving licence or similar identity documentation at the library counter gives you instant borrowing rights at your local university.

There are immense specialist resources in our academic libraries which should be made available to the community. Funding restraints make it difficult for many public libraries to make more than the most general provision of reference material. Specialist services, such as music libraries, have been curtailed in some authorities. Where a local college teaches music and the college library holds books, scores, records and tapes for such courses, there is no reason why, with a little imaginative planning, some of these facilities should not be made available to local music societies and music lovers. We all know that there is little call on academic library resources between July and September. This period of low usage could be jointly explored with the local Adult Education officers and WEA so that facilities could be extended to local residents.

Academic libraries could also make more use of local radio to inform the community about their stock and services. Local radio is an excellent link between higher education and the wider community. Programmes of potential interest to local people include book reviews, critical discussion and those of the 'book at bedtime' variety. All of these are areas where the academic library could provide an input.

Another neglected area of liaison with local people is through schools. Visits by school parties to their local academic library can be rewarding for both sides. If children are encouraged to see the different types of library provision in this country, public, school and academic, as links in the chain of knowledge available to them, they will make much better use of the range of provision when they become students or undertake training courses. A few academic libraries have deliberately forged links with a number of local schools and host all-day visits from pupils, as well as encouraging sixth-formers to come to the library for work-experience. During WISE Year, as one example, Surrey University ran two one-day courses introducing local 5th form girls to a wide range of computer applications in which the library participated. participated.

In conclusion I would like to reiterate some points which I made earlier.

Libraries exist to fulfil a social and cultural need. Academic libraries exist to fill a specialised aspect of that need. They are concerned, or should be, with the education and training, not only of their own identified client group, but also with the wider educational needs of their local community.

We live in a period of highly accelerated change when technology is introducing new patterns of employment with a speed never before envisaged and, conversely, creating leisure and educational needs the scale of which, even now, we do not wholly perceive. Academic libraries have an important role to play in these changes. The exact nature of that role is not yet clear — we are too close to the process of change. To assist us in trying to identify the scope of our role, academic libraries can adopt the marketing philosophy which has been so successfully pioneered in industry.

This approach will cause us to shift the emphasis of our operation from service detail to user need. The analysis of user need must begin with the establishment of corporate objectives,

understood and accepted by the whole library staff. The paramount needs of the user will be identified by examining the characteristics of the market in which we work. This means asking several basic questions: Who do we serve? How do we serve? When — and with what?

Once we have established our objectives and analysed our market, we need to determine the action we wish to take and the resources and channels open to us to implement our decisions.

But, adapting industrial philosophy to the needs of our profession does not stop with the implementation of our objectives. As librarians, we must be aware of, and concerned about, quality. It is vital to the credibility and success of our role in society, as well as in our individual institutions, that we constantly monitor the user's needs and that we regularly evaluate our response to those needs. There is no room for stagnation in our approach. We must guarantee our users a continuity of quality.

Just as a successful company monitors its profits and measures the life of its products against customer response, so academic librarians should be constantly on the alert to maintain and improve the quality and range of their service and to match it to changing user requirements.

Elizabeth Esteve-Coll is Librarian at the National Art Library.

Library Association : Colleges of Further and Higher Education Group

The Library Association's Colleges of Further and Higher Education Group (CoFHE) (membership 1921) exists to:

- promote and monitor standards and good current practice in librarianship in the field of further and higher education
- supply informed comment to the Library Association on professional matters from the viewpoint of academic institutions
- facilitate communications between members and between individuals and the Library Association
- help members keep up to date and develop professionally, organising meetings and conferences and publishing material on current issues

CoFHE has a national committee of nine and an active network of regional circles. These latter are very much the product of members' initiatives and are often formed as a result of attendance at the Group's four day annual conference. The Group publishes the CoFHE Bulletin three times a year.

College librarians believe themselves to be educators and base their services on the academic objectives of their colleges, responding actively to their information needs. This philosophy is fully expressed in 'College Librarianship' (LA, 1984), edited by A Rennie McElroy, the Chairman of CoFHE, to which a number of members contributed. CoFHE has also produced for the Library Association 'College Libraries: guidelines for professional service and resource provision' (LA, 1982). (A list of some of the Group's other publications is given elsewhere.)

The papers in this publication were delivered at a one day conference, 'Marketing Strategies for the Academic Library', held at the English Speeking Union in June 1985 and organised by the Group's London and South East Circle.

The aim of the conference was to consider the attitudes, concepts and techniques involved in marketing for non-profit making organisations and to explore how librarians in further and higher education can use these to optimise the effectiveness of their service provision in a time of economic constraint.

SURVEYING THE USER AND USER STUDIES

Colin Harris

I assume that my task here is to say something about the basic techniques of studying users or of analysing the market. I shall say very little about marketing per se. I shall not use the concepts of marketing. I shall not use the jargon of marketing. I shall say almost nothing about marketing. I shall leave that to my colleagues; I shall concentrate on some aspects of approaches to studying users.

There are a couple of ways in which the title of my contribution is misleading.

First, the title includes the expression 'surveying the user'. I prefer the term 'studying the user', simply because there is more than one way of studying the user or studying the market. There are techniques other than surveying, and I shall say a bit about some of them.

The second misleading thing, and the more obvious one, is the reference to users. Now, of course, everyone will assume that the term includes non-users, potential users, and so on. But the distinction between users and non-users has important methodological implications and I think this should be made explicit. This raises the question of definitions of market or potential market or actual market.

The third misleading thing is less obvious, and that is the assumption that some form of survey of users might be necessary in a marketing effort. It might be that a survey of users might be quite necessary. Many kinds of studies can be undertaken with no direct interaction with users. For example, it is possible, by studying objects alone, to discover a great deal about the aggregate behaviour of users (or of the market) and this will often produce much more accurate results than would be produced by studying users. The most trivial example would be to consider how you would find out how many people used (entered or visited) your library on a particular day, in a particular year, or at particular times of the day.

Now you could do a user study to find this out. You could mount a census or a sample survey of your user population. You could get them to fill in diaries or to fill in questionnaires or you could interview them. It would take a great deal of effort, the results would be subject to a great deal of error. A much simpler way would be to read the numbers on the turnstile.

To take a more complicated and more realistic problem — say you wanted to know about levels of book use in different parts of the collection. You could mount a survey to find out how many books in different subjects your users had borrowed or consulted. The problems of doing this are enormous. Plainly it would be easier and more accurate to study the books themselves, assuming that is that the books contain some record of use, of loans or consultations.

It may be that you need information that is not just uni-dimensional, that relates to the interaction between two or more variables. You don't only want to know, for example, how much the books in each class are used, but by whom. Questions like 'who uses sociology books?' or 'what books do sociologists use?' are fundamental questions for an academic library. To answer the first type of question — 'who uses sociology books?' — within a survey would be extremely difficult. The answer to the second type of question — 'what books do sociologists use?' — would be less difficult but they would both be much more easily and more accurately answered by studying loan records than by asking users.

Many questions can be answered by studying objects or events or records of transactions, but many cannot. Questions of attitude or opinion or preference or evaluation all require contact with the users, as do any explanations of behaviour suggested by these simple measures

indicated above. If you want to know *why* sociologists use the range of books that they do, or if you want to know *why* sociology books are used by the range of users they are used by, then you have to do something other than studying the books themselves or the records of their use — you have to talk to people.

The significance of all this to a marketing effort should be obvious, that there are different types of information, with different appropriate ways of discovering them.

This is an important point to make. If you think about other marketing analogies you would not expect Heinz or Crosse & Blackwell to ask their customers how many tins of baked beans they (Heinz or Crosse & Blackwell) sell. You would not expect them to ask customers whether they sell more in Tesco than in Sainsbury's. You would expect Heinz or Crosse & Blackwell already to know these things and you would expect them to use what they already know to inform the development of questions that they need or want the answers to. I am not sure that libraries do this, in fact I am certain they do not. There is available to any library a potential mass of information about the constituency, the composition and the behaviour of its market that librarians make no effort to collect. So when they start to think about doing user studies or market studies, studies that involve actual interaction with users, and we ask them what they already know about rates of use of the collection or parts of the collection, or kinds of material, or the behaviour of different groups within their constituency, the answer is usually 'not much'. This is important because the question of what you already know and what you need to know and how the former informs the development of questions about the latter, is relevant in all kinds of user study. The kind of thing that you want to know will determine the kind of study that you carry out, and different studies can be fundamentally different in their design, execution and interpretation.

Let us consider three different kinds of questions relating to users that you might want to ask. You may or may not think that these are marketing questions. I think they are marketing questions, but see what you think.

First, of all you might simply want to know what are the rates of library use by users in different departments. You may want to know this for a variety of reasons. You may want to know how actual use compares with provision that is made for different kinds of user groups in terms of expenditure, budget, and so on. You want base line data to use in assessing the impact of changes of policy. These may be changes in opening hours, changes in borrowing rights, changes in charges, changes in ways of rationing inter-library loans, changes in any aspect of library service. This is an easy study to do. You can identify all the kinds of information you need. You will have little difficulty in framing questions. They will be mainly of a structured, closed-ended, quantitative type. You will be seeking facts, not opinions or speculation. You will need a representative sample that will be relatively easy to get. Your problems, if you have any, will be simply in making sure that respondents understand what you mean by your questions, perhaps individual concepts, and their being able to recall accurately in giving their responses.

In another study you might not know exactly what questions you want answered or the terms in which you want them answered. Your position might be that you know you are ignorant of something and you need to explore. Imagine that you are in the middle of a research selectivity exercise and that, as a result of this your institution is going to become a non-research institution in some subject area and you know, or hope, that research will be enhanced in other areas. You know what to do when research is de-emphasised — you carry less journals; when it is enhanced, you carry more journals.

But you might feel that a radical re-structuring of the institution and its activities calls for a more radical assessment of the place of the library. You may know something about the information needs of particular groups from reading the literature and you may have done studies in your institution of particular groups of users. The problem with this is that the ground is shifting all the time. The study that you did maybe five years ago might be almost

irrelevant to you now. Attitudes and habits formed in one set of economic circumstances might be quite different in another. It is in this sort of context that you hardly know what questions to ask. So you cannot carry out the conventional survey. You have to find out what the situation means to those in the middle of it, to those participating in it; how they perceive the problems; what they think are the available solutions; how they would choose between different solutions; and what the implications would be of a particular course of action for them or for their library. For that sort of problem a questionnaire or a structured interview study, the sort of thing that you normally think of when you consider a user survey or a market survey, is going to be quite inappropriate.

The third kind of study that you might want to carry out is some sort of practical test. There are many areas of library policy where, although you can ask users how their behaviour would change if a particular course were followed, the real test is to try it and see: reductions in service of various kinds, charges, rationing, changes in collection development policy, or the introduction of new and different services. The real test of impact is not to ask 'what would be the case if?' but to do it and see. What is then needed if any sense is to be made of a change in policy or practice is some sort of experimental design: an innovation, a change in policy or practice is, for research purposes, an experiment. Now there is a vast literature on experimental design and I do not propose to say much about it. The distinctive thing about experimental designs is that they seek to measure, specifically, the effect of a particular cause, and there are many pitfalls. The main pitfall is that any single outcome can be the result of any of a wide range of causes or a combination of causes. If you know, for example, that the introduction of a charge for inter-library loans *is followed by* a reduction in demand, it does not follow that the introduction of charging is *the cause of* the reduction. In some cases you might be able to assume a logical connection. If you introduce a charge for inter-library loans you could not assume that it follows logically that demand would reduce. If you were to ration inter-library loans then, given certain assumptions, you could assume that demand would reduce logically but you would not be certain how far other variables might influence a decline in demand. One way to overcome this uncertainty is to use control groups, an essential feature of experimental design.

I am not going to say a lot about this, except that in our context they are almost always ruled out on either ethical grounds or political ones. Can you imagine, for example, introducing a temporary policy of charging for inter-library loans for chemistry users but not for physics users, or for charging some chemistry users but not others, so that others can form a control group? It is an interesting question, and one that we faced many years ago in the 'Travelling Workshops' Experiment. Some of our advisors, scientists mainly, wanted a good solid experimental design, and good solid experimental designs include control groups. We would give our 'treatment', as the jargon has it, to half a class of students and not give it to the other half. Now if you are doing the job in the first place, it is to be assumed that you are doing a job that would be of some benefit. Would you want to deprive half a class that is going to form the control group of this supposed benefit? Of course not! You have to find other ways.

I don't want to say much about the nuts and bolts of carrying out user studies for a variety of reasons. There are other means that will teach you better, and a series of CRUS booklets. In any case, I do not think this is the right forum for instruction in carrying out user studies. I want to make a few general points and raise some general questions for you to think about.

The first question is 'Is a study worth doing in the first place? Do you know what you need to know? Will your study tell you what you need to know? What will your study cost you? Will you be able to use the results of the study for purposes for which you think you will be able to use them?' These questions are rarely thought out very carefully. When people seek advice in designing research projects, usually the first question they ask is 'What size sample do I need?'; usually the second question is 'Will you give us your comments on this draft questionnaire?' They have not really thought very carefully about what the study was intended to achieve, what information was already available, how the study they wanted to do related to

what they already had available in the records, etc. Almost never did people think about what the costs would be.

Let us take costs. Except in cases where it is necessary to purchase the services of some outside organisation like Aslib or CRUS, the real costs of in-house research are very rarely calculated. They should be, of course, for a variety of reasons. The first is that you ought to know when you are designing a project whether the projected outcome is worth the projected cost. Some of the examples I mentioned earlier show that you could spend a great deal of money discovering something that might be quite trivial and that certainly would not be worthwhile. If you consider that it is going to take three months of your time and might cost £3,000, it might be plain that the information you are going to get as a result would not be worth £3,000 if you had to buy it. You ought to know the actual cost of the actual outcome, which might be different from the intended or projected cost. So you ought to know when you have done the project how much the actual job, the actual outcome, cost. You will be in a position then to claim that you have made a wise investment or not. You will need to know the opportunity costs, you will want to know what you have foregone. We are not talking about buying in services, we are not talking about extra cash for extra effort, we are talking about people like you making the effort in your own libraries to carry out some kind of study prior to some kind of marketing exercise. If you do some sort of survey, you do it at the expense of some other activity and you ought to know what the other activity is and what its costs are. We no longer have any slack to take up; we have to make choices between one thing or another.

The final reason why you ought to know something about costs is that someone very important might ask you. If you do know the actual costs of the actual outcome, it might be that you have made a poor investment. It might be that you will look a fool when your boss asks you or when some interfering busybody asks you. But not knowing the costs makes you look even more foolish; it makes you look a very poor manager indeed.

If you decide that the project is worth doing, you then have to decide how to do it: the methodology. On the whole I think it is true to say that methodological problems are very much less serious for academic libraries than for some others. There are virtually no problems of defining the population. We know what our population of users is, except at the margin. There are no problems of devising a sampling frame, we have lists of students and staff and researchers and so on, except at the margin.

There are no problems in drawing the complex stratified samples which are normally necessary because everything is organised for you by department, by year, by status of user, and so on. And maybe the most important; there are no problems in gaining entry to the organisation to do the work in the first place. The favoured methods of data collection are obviously going to be questionnaires or interviews. I will not say a lot about them because it is in the literature. You have the advantage of knowing that all of your users will be literate and will be able to read and understand and answer a questionnaire. Of course, many non-English speaking students would have difficulty, but on the whole you ought to be able to assume a higher level of literacy than you would if you were doing a general survey for a public library, for example. In addition, you may use observation. It is unlikely in a market study that you would use observation, but a more systematised variation of everyday observation is useful in interpreting or cross-checking results that you get from other means, from interviews or questionnaires.

These data collection methods are well known and they are all well documented. They are largely self-explanatory. We know what questionnaires are — they are lists of questions that people read and fill in the answers. We know what interviews are — they are formatted discussions between interviewers and respondents. We know what observation is — it is watching people do things. In fact the simplicity conceals quite a wide variety of methods. The main difference lies in degrees of structure. The degrees of structure involve degrees of formality or control or structure in asking questions, in the questions that are asked, the contents of the schedule, in the wording of the questions and in the order of questions. In a highly structured questionnaire the questions, the question wording, and the question order

are not variable. In a highly structured interview that, too, would be the case. There would be a schedule that the interviewer would adhere to rigidly. In a less structured interview the questions that are asked, the wording of them, the order of them, and so on, can be varied. There are degrees of structure in responses as well. There are highly structured response options where the responses that are available to a respondent are closed-ended; they have to answer in the questionnaire's terms or the interviewer's terms. It involves a selection from a set of given responses or some response on some semantic scale or numeric scale. And at the other extreme they can be open-ended and replies would be in the respondent's own language. We would expect to use a high level of structure when we know exactly what questions we want to ask and when we know how we want the responses made. Often if you know exactly what questions you want to ask you will also know how you want your responses made, but not always. The great strength, it is argued, of highly structured interviews or questionnaires is that you have standardised, comparable responses. In fact, what you have is the artificial concealment of a great deal of interpretation of question, and differences in the meaning of similarly expressed responses. Highly structured studies are easy to analyse. They give quantitative data readily. They give a broad if somewhat shallow picture. You would use a low level of structure when you are doing something that is exploratory (for example, if you wanted to work out ways of asking questions in a more highly structured study), if you need to have the respondent's perspective or if you are seeking depth of understanding rather than measurement. A low level structure would produce results that are more difficult to analyse, that give a narrower but deeper picture, a much less tidy picture, and that is a serious problem. Of course, you may use a relatively unstructured approach to begin with, as some sort of pilot study, and then formalise that into the more structured approach. Of course, it would be possible to use an approach that combined the best of both worlds. You would find most schedules, if they are any good, combine the best of both.

There are variations on these methods and I should mention two in particular because I think they are relevant to our business. The important variation on the questionnaire is the diary. Diaries are commonly used in audience research and consumer research. They have also been used in library research and they give you a picture of the way in which things happen over time, a picture of evolution or of development. The other variation is a group interview. We use group interviews a lot because we think they are, for the kind of work we do in academic libraries, an excellent method of getting a wide range of information. You don't get a lot of quantitative data; you do get a lot of qualitative data. There are dangers in group interviews, of course; dangers of them being dominated, dangers of an imbalance in the kind of responses that you get, but nevertheless I think they are one of the most useful devices that we have, because it gives you what I call 'instant triangulation'. One of the things that you always need, whatever kind of study you do, is to check one response against another response. You can never take any response at face value because someone may have something to hide, something to project, some particular effect that they want to achieve. One of the things about groups is that it gives you an opportunity instantly to check one response against another and I find this particularly useful in the academic context, particularly when you get teachers and students together. When you get them both in a group together you can check them one against the other. You get instant triangulation and you get a much deeper understanding of processes in the department or problems in the department. In one group interview with six people you get a much greater qualitative understanding than you would get by a questionnaire survey of a department.

There are other methods; market research is full of other specific techniques or methods that we don't have time to go into. You will know Blaise Cronin's book and if you have looked at that you will see the kinds of things that have been borrowed from market research and applied to library research. Cronin has talked, for example, about life style analysis, which he particularly likes, trade-off analysis, conjoint analysis, etc. And there are other things, there are other ways of formalising the subjective, for example, in the use personal constructs and

repertory grids. I think that it is a good idea to be eclectic; it is a good idea to borrow from as many things that seem like good and useful tools, from as many areas as you can find them, but unless somebody has a sound background or a good friend in one of these particular techniques, I think it is a good idea to avoid them. A little knowledge may be a dangerous thing.

The major problem with user studies, and I think it is particularly the case here, is that what you want to do as a result of any sort of user study or user survey or market study is to change things. Most user studies tell us what users already do, what they already know, what they are already aware of, or the kinds of choices they already make. They don't tell us what users actually need, they don't tell us what users would do if things were different, they don't tell us what users would do with a different kind of service if they had it. User studies, market studies, do not tell us what to do with the results. The results have to be a matter of judgement applied to such results as you are able to get from your study.

Colin Harris, University Librarian, Clifford Whitworth University Library, University of Salford.

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PREPARING A MARKETING PLAN

Jack D. Cairns

Marketing planning is essentially the same process no matter what kind of product or service an organisation is developing and marketing. As I am concerned with an industrial training company, I shall be talking about taking this kind of service activity as a case study to illustrate the application of marketing planning. However, if I can help you understand the basic process, I do not believe that it will be too difficult to adapt this process for your own particular needs. So before starting to discuss marketing planning a few brief words about the organisation I work for.

Southtek started in 1983 as a collaborative project involving 14 further education colleges and 14 manufacturing companies in East Sussex, West Sussex and Kent working with their local education authorities to develop a new approach to industrial training. Part of the MSC's Open Tech programme, the Southtek unit received considerable pump-priming finance to get started. East Sussex County Council was the official contract holder.

Our contract with the Open Tech unit was developed with two main objectives. First, to research industry's training needs with particular emphasis on the impact of new technology on new skill development, and then to develop training packages to meet these needs. The second objective was to forge links between educational and industrial organisations at a local level. We believe that we are achieving both these aims. The vehicle for training which we are producing is a range of open learning packages each with a nominal 16 hours study time.

I feel that it is appropriate to mention at this stage that in April 1985 overall responsibility for Southtek's development was transferred to MacMillan Publishing Ltd, resulting in the formation of a private limited company;the company is controlled by MacMillan's but the colleges and local education authorities of East and West Sussex and Kent continue to play an important role in Southtek's future. A trust is being established through which Southtek Ltd can help to extend the industrial training activities of its associated colleges. The colleges also continue to help develop many of Southtek Ltd's multi-media distance learning packages.

With the first wave of products now available, the involvement of MacMillan's has been timely for Southtek, since it now benefits from the support and guidance of a commercial management structure, and Southtek's customers are pleased to know that the organisation now possesses the management and financial resources necessary to support this innovative programme through these all important early years in the market-place.

HOW DOES SOUTHTEK OPERATE?

Having identified specific training needs through comprehensive research at several levels and within many sectors of manufacturing industry, the objectives for a group or 'string' of packages are agreed between our own engineers and consultants from industry. The first draft of a package is then developed by a team of specialist writers based either within a technical college or within a commercial technical writing company. On completion of the first draft, Southtek's editorial staff move in to transform basic text into a multi-media training package, incorporating audio and video tapes, computer-based training disks, practical kits and tutorial support material. Before final production, each package or title is fully tested with a

representative sample of users within a number of companies. If some part of a package does not come up to expectations, we revise it and re-test it before final production. The packages are then marketed through college-based open learning centres or sold direct to industrial concerns.

WHAT IS A PACKAGE?

Briefly, there are usually four components:-

- A user pack comprising
  - Workbook
  - Practical book
  - Audio tape
  - Test documents
- An adviser pack which includes
  - Video tape
  - CBT disk
  - Adviser guide:

  which helps the tutor to cover practical work, tests, etc.
- Practical kit, 25% 'hands-on' activity within each package

and lastly, but not least, personal adviser support — the support system.

SUPPORT SYSTEM

The support system ties in with the overall delivery of training. We believe that simply handing over training materials to an employee is not enough to ensure effectiveness. Personal support to a Southtek Package involves:

Counselling
- — Ensuring the right packages undertaken appropriate for the employee's job, at the right level for his/her ability.
- — Bridging the training to the job.

Technical help
- — With content.
- — With practical work.

Administration
- — Stock control.
- — Registration.
- — Invoicing, etc.
- — Having the right kit or video available at the right time.

This service is now available from a growing network of college-based support centres throughout the UK; we are aiming to have over 50 colleges operational by the end of 1985 — about 30 are active at the moment. Similar arrangements are being made with the training departments of larger companies where the volume of people makes it worthwhile to operate an in-house support system.

BENEFITS OF SOUTHTEK PACKAGES TO USERS

Highly cost-effective — time off job reduced or eliminated — minimal or no travel or accommodation costs

Flexible approach — wherever: whenever: no time constraints

Attractive design — enjoyable and entertaining as well as instructional

Needs-based training — modular approach allows for the 'right' amount of training tailored to the individual

Support guarantees effectiveness — we in Southtek would argue that a pure open learning approach with no provision for personal interaction between trainer and trainee supplies no guarantee that actual training has taken place at all, or is achieving the results required. The support services inherent in the Southtek system guarantee that skills and knowledge have been acquired and that investment in an individual's training has been worthwhile.

THE MARKETING PLAN

I must make it clear from the outset that creating a marketing plan cannot be achieved by filling in a set of forms. Although the headings I shall discuss can follow a format, the marketing plan cannot be produced cast in concrete. Marketing is a dynamic activity relating to an organisation's interaction with the world outside in the form of its markets. The only constant in that interaction *is change*; thus your plan and your management of that plan must be flexible and 'organic', to be able to cope with change.

TABLE 1 : MARKETING PLANNING AND ITS PLACE IN THE CORPORATE PLANNING CYCLE

Step 1	*2 Management Audit*	*3 Objective Strategy Setting*	*4 Plans*	*5 Corporate Plans*
	Marketing Audit Marketing	Marketing objectives, strategies	Marketing plan	Issue of corporate plan, to include corporate objectives and strategies etc; long range P & L accounts and balance sheets
	Distribution Audit Stocks and control; transportation; warehousing	Distribution objectives, strategies	Distribution plan	
Corporate Financial Objectives	*Production Audit* Value analysis; engineering development; work study; quality control; labour; materials, plant and space utilisation; production planning; factories	Production objectives, strategies	Production plan	
	Financial Audit Credit, debt, cash flow and budgetary control; resource allocation; capex; long term finance	Financial objectives, strategies	Financial Plan	
	Personnel audit Management, technical and administrative ability etc	Personnel objectives, strategies		

Measurement, review and amendment (if necessary) of operating plans is continuous

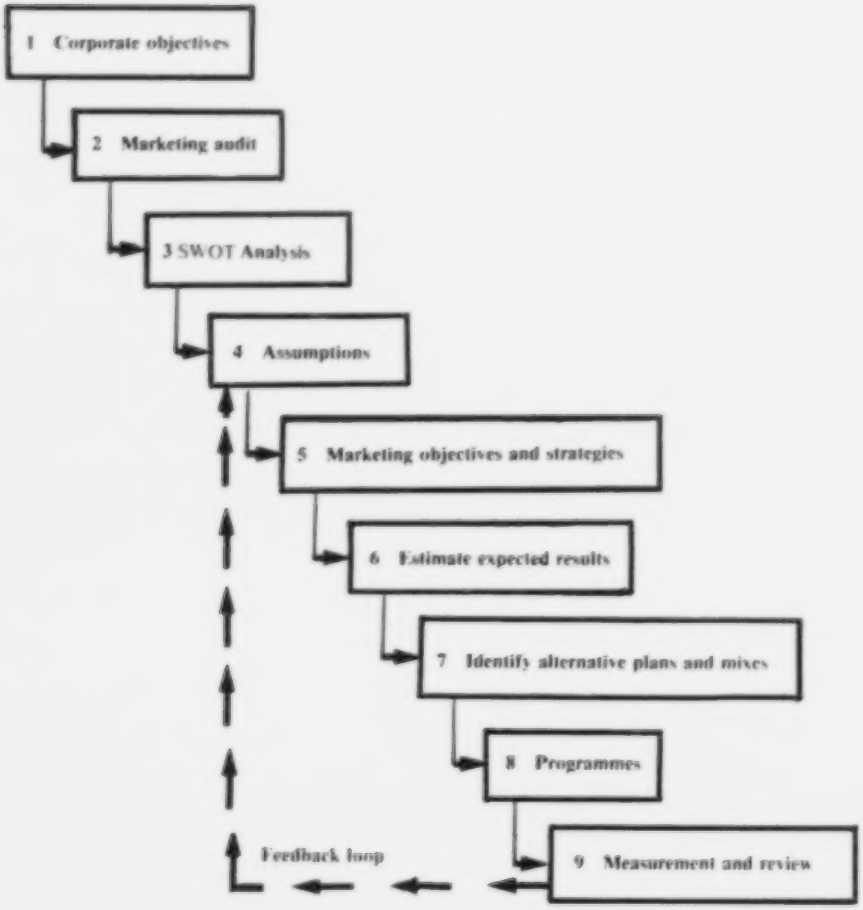
Let us consider the marketing plan in the context of the corporate plan (Table 1). In determining the corporate objectives, three factors must first be explored;

i) do we have an in-depth, up-to-date, definition of the business we are in relate[illegible] our markets, and exploiting our particular strengths? (in other words, are we sure we understand the business we are in?);

ii) are the profit targets we set, realistic, quantified and related to the business sectors in which we operate? (how profitable do we really want/need to be?);

iii) have we examined the meaning and requirement for growth and specified the type of market-related growth targets we require? (how fast do we really want/need to grow?).

TABLE 2 : THE MARKETING PLANNING PROCESS



From the corporate plan comes the marketing plan (Table 2). Corporate objectives (1) have to be made clear; for example,

'to become established in at least one new export market'

or

'to increase turnover by 'X'% and profits by 'Y'%.'

Try and *quantify* because this helps establish the *scale* of activities, and helps to determine resource needs.

The marketing audit (2) comes next. This is almost a study in itself. It is essentially an exercise to assemble sufficient information to answer *objectively* a range of questions pertaining to an organisation's marketing activities (Table 3). To be most effective, the marketing audit should be undertaken by independent consultants or at least by marketing personnel divorced from the day-to-day activities of the organisation under review.

TABLE 3 : THE MARKETING AUDIT

Pricing	Is the current pricing strategy effective? (Does the discount policy result in real cost savings or sales volume gain?)
Distribution	Is the desired market access being achieved? Are the current outlets providing appropriate customer service? What is the balance of power between producer and distributor? Is outlet performance being assessed regularly?
Promotion	How effective is the 'promotional mix'? — P.R. — Advertising — Sales Promotion — Personal Selling How is the nature of the sales task changing? What changes necessitate retraining the sales force? Are all the elements of the promotional mix integrated and synchronised?

SWOT analysis (3) should then be carried out:

Strengths;
Weaknesses;
Opportunities;
Threats.

Assumptions (4) have to be reviewed, for example, are there sufficient funds for new product development; are there no major new competitors; will there be no severe economic downturn?

Marketing objectives and strategies (5) have to be identified. The process is completed by making estimates of expected results (6), identifying alternative plans and mixes (7), formulating programmes (8), and setting up measurement and review procedures (9) (Table 2).

It is important to recognise that the plan, however well constructed, is dependent upon the execution by the various marketing staff members for its success. It is not the plan, but *people* who guarantee results.

APPROACHES TO MARKETING PLANNING

Some companies construct plans at a senior level and delegate them to the more junior management and staff. Other firms start the planning process at the lower levels and consolidate the resulting plans into the overall corporate plan. 'Top down' planning can ensure a total corporate view is taken; 'bottom up' planning that departmental or local experience and expertise is utilised. The most successful approach seems to be a combination of these two methods which can achieve the advantages of both, a 'goals down, plans up approach'.

First, top management refine the corporate marketing, financial and growth objectives and strategies for the forthcoming period taking into consideration the external and internal factors such as the general state of the economies and markets in which they operate, production capability, financial resources of the company, etc. These are issued as planning guidelines to each function of the company.

Secondly, the planning guidelines are communicated to the lowest possible level in the marketing activity. This can mean both area management or individual salesmen, as well as say, product management depending on the structure of the company.

The sales team starts planning by considering the whole product range across the individual territories, accounts, or markets for which they are responsible; the product managers plan for their particular products across all territories. Regular communication needs to be maintained so that each side knows what the other is considering and can assess the impact of, for example, new products or take local distributive change into account.

TABLE 4 : BASIC STRATEGIC ALTERNATIVES

	EXISTING PRODUCTS	NEW PRODUCTS
Existing Markets	1 Market Penetration	3 Product Development
New Markets	2 Market Development	4 Diversification

By such a dual approach, there is a continuous cross-check of forecasts, since the totals of sales by both territory and product should ultimately be the same. Furthermore, the involvement of both sides enhances their commitment to the eventual plans that are agreed, thus avoiding the motivational problems caused, for instance, when sales management feel the targets are imposed on them by product management.

Thirdly, when the basic plans have been drafted, the various marketing support functions — marketing research, sales office, technical service, training — can begin to plan their activities in the light of them. This sequence ensures that the support functions are fully integrated and not allowed to operate as independent units as can easily happen. For example, it can help avoid the common complaint from line sales management that the training departments' programmes have been constructed without full recognition of the present and future realities that face the field sales force.

Fourthly, the total marketing plan is brought together and checked for its relevance to and likely achievement of the corporate objectives and strategies, its feasibility, coherence and the competitive reaction that it may cause. Sufficient time must be allowed at this stage for challenging all or any part of the plan, usually via a process of plans presentation by the managers concerned, to the whole marketing management team led by the Marketing Director, who should challenge the assumption of the planners, and question for alternative courses of action. This is often the most creative part of the planning process as it forces more detailed analysis and reconsideration of tacitly held assumptions. We find that this challenge phase is often underrated or omitted entirely because of time pressure which usually means that the final plans are not as deeply considered as they might have been.

Fifthly, if the top management team is satisfied with the Marketing Plan, it can then be

circulated and used for detailed production and financial planning. Production and financial considerations will have been built into the original planning guidelines so that the marketing plan should have taken any major constraints into account. Nevertheless, the consolidation of the marketing and other functional plans does often require futher adjustments to each of them to be made before general management can be satisfied that the corporate plan is feasible, challenging and coherent.

Thought needs to be given to the time span of the plan. Traditionally marketing plans were produced for the year ahead in detail, and three to five years ahead in outline. In an increasingly volatile world these periods may need reconsideration. Even the amount of detail demanded in the normal annual plan may now be unrealistic and the time and effort spent on producing it wasted as it is so rapidly outdated. It might be wiser to plan only six months ahead in the traditional detail, leaving the second half of the year to be specified nearer the time.

The medium and long-term time periods certainly should be re-examined for their practicality and shortened wherever possible. Otherwise the planners simply go through the longer-term exercise without any real commitment, knowing that they will have the opportunity to up-date (which often mean totally change!) their three or five year plans each year. Of course, every organisation needs a longer than one year sense of direction, but this should be given by the objectives and strategies. Some companies, because of the nature of their investment situations, are forced to take long-term views. However, the Marketing Director can save such wasted planning time if he tailors the plan period to the reality of the changing markets and the fundamental corporate needs, rather than continuing traditional practices of lengthy plan periods which today have no real meaning or effect.

EVALUATING THE MARKETING PLAN

As the plan is gradually constructed and particularly when it is finally completed, management needs to evaluate it to ensure its relevance to the objectives and strategies of the company, its practicality as a blueprint for implementation and its contribution to the on-going measurement and control of the marketing activity. Reflecting on each of the following aspects will help ensure the plan achieves these basic goals:

1. WILL THE PLAN ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVES?

The most basic judgement to be made of any plan is whether its successful implementation will cause the objectives to be achieved. This decision can be facilitated by summarising the key action priorities from what is usually a lengthy document, recognising that significant changes in results usually demands significant changes in activity (Table 5).

TABLE 5 : EVALUATING THE MARKETING PLAN

To be effective, the Marketing Plan must:-

- relate to the market
- fulfil the strategic interaction
- satisfy the financial objective
- specify the action and focus effort
- search for different, more effective methods of achieving results
- cover the right timescales

2. IS THE PLAN MUTUALLY COHERENT?

As the full range of proposed action programmes is considered, care must be taken that they are integrated into a coherent and preferably synergistic whole. For example, plans to eliminate direct servicing of small accounts must be evaluated against intentions to reduce dependence on major customers. Corporate promotion activities must be integrated with in-store merchandising activity. Pricing changes must be viewed against distributor motivation. Such balancing may seem obvious but it is our experience that because the marketing plan is often produced by a variety of separate managers, it is all too easy to finalise a plan which, at worst, contains mutually contradictory action programmes and at best fails to gain maximum mileage from the marketing expenditure. This can be particularly true where there are a number of product or brand managers seeking implementation of their plans through common sales, merchandising, technical service or promotional functions. In such companies, it is all too often the case that much time and effort is spent on fighting for shares of the common resources unless management ensures that there is a fair balance specified in the marketing plan.

3. IS THE TIMING OF THE PLAN REALISTIC?

The timing of the actions within the plan should also be assessed to ensure it is synchronised and flexible. New product promotion must be preceded by adequate distribution which in turn depends on the briefing and training of the salesforce and allowing sufficient time for them to cover their territories adequately. Flexibility implies that sufficient regard has been paid to the length of time it takes to achieve certain actions and contingencies built in to allow for slippage. For example, the time needed to recruit,induct, train and make fully effective new management and staff tends to be underestimated and little if any allowance made for the effect, for example, of having to re-advertise. If the plan demands an increase in the salesforce it is too facile to assume that the new men will be in position and fully operational from the first day of the new year, especially when final plans approval to hire them may only be a few days or weeks before the year starts.

The care needed to synchronise timing within the marketing activity should be redoubled when marketing actions depend on other company functions or outside suppliers. A great deal of effort and tension is wasted trying to adhere to timetables involving others which were probably unrealistic to start with. Heavily advertised products that consumers cannot find in stock, industrial sales negotiations whose delivery commitments cannot be met, technical service backlogs reflecting on new products sales are still all commonplace events which might have been alleviated with more realistic analysis of the timing implications of such interrelated actions.

Another aspect of timing that the Marketing Director should check is that the plan does cover the whole period it is supposed to embrace. Reference has already been made to the avoidance of action in the early months of the new year caused by recurrent late plans approval. The converse, however, can also occur where the majority if not all the action is bunched early in the period covered by the plan, leaving little or no resources for action later in the period, particularly if unforseen events arise. Thus in one lingerie company, a three year marketing plan was constructed for the launch of a new product line specifying the use of 90% of the total promotional expenditure in the first year. This created high demand which unfortunately could not be satisfied because of failure to achieve adequate distribution. However, the heavy advertising alerted the competitors, one of whom responded by rapidly developing and launching their own brand in the second year.

This market entry had not been predicted, little promotional reserve was left to counter the launch and the actual sales revenue was lower than predicted because of the failure to supply. By the third year, the competition was totally entrenched and the original company was left poor second in the market that they had originally identified and developed. Perhaps the situation would have ended very differently if the three year plan had in reality covered the three years instead of being a one year plan with two and three sales forecasts based on the assumption of success in the first year.

4. HOW WILL COMPETITION REACT?

The case history above demonstrates another factor which the Marketing Director must ensure has been taken fully into account: that of a competitive action and reaction. Although much lip service is paid to monitoring the competition, in practice it seems that management teams can become so introverted during the planning process that they fail to recognise that any action they plan may not only cause but also condition the competitive response.

5. DOES THE PLAN IDENTIFY REGULAR CONTROL PROCEDURE?

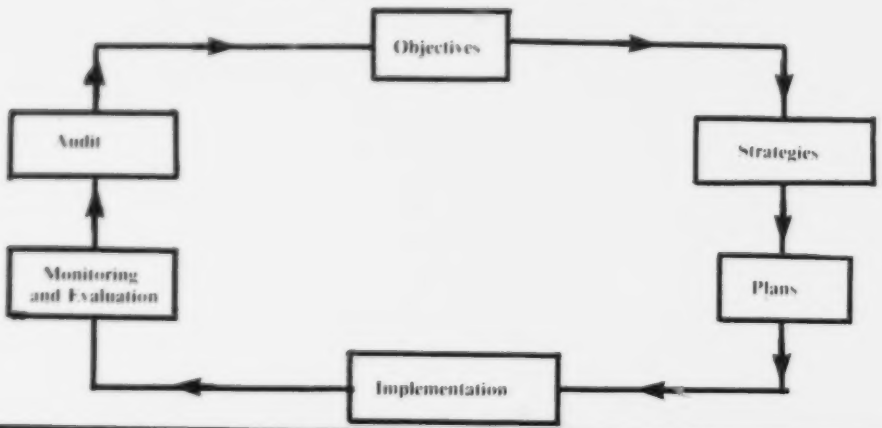
Finally, the Marketing Director should assure himself that the plan is capable of being constantly evaluated during and particularly at the end of the period it covers. This means that specific goals need to be set for each activity whether these be targets, communication objectives, etc. The actions themselves should be specified, timed and budgeted so that it can be seen what should happen when, towards what ends and at what costs. Who is supposed to carry out which action should be identified, preferably by name, so there can be no misunderstanding about the commitment. Only this way can the plan be made into a practical prescription for implementation and form a solid basis for the marketing evaluation and control system.

OPERATING THE MARKETING PLAN

The attitude of many executives seems to be that once the plan is finalised, they can get back to running the business, implying that planning and implementation are separate and unrelated activities. But the completion and approval of the plan is the beginning, not the end, of the planning process. Patently if the plan is not used as a marketing tool by management, the cost, time and effort that goes into its construction is largely wasted. Management must be clear that the plan is a practical document, that it will be used to implement and control the marketing activity and it will form a basis for individual performance evaluation of the managers concerned.

Such attitudes must be inculcated during the planning cycle and especially throughout the implementation process.

TABLE 6 : THE MARKETING PLANNING CYCLE



REVIEWING THE PLAN

This can be achieved by scheduling regular review meetings at, at least, quarterly intervals when the action programmes specified in the plan will be discussed to ensure they have been implemented and to assess the results that have accrued from them. Any additions or amendments to the plan in the light of unforseen or changing circumstances can be decided and noted in writing on the plan document itself. This is particularly important so that when the next planning cycle commences, there is a more realistic basis available. From time to time, and at least annually, the longer terms plans from previous years should be evaluated. Even in those companies which do carefully monitor the progress on the annual plan, it is rare to find sufficient assessment of the three year plan of two years ago.

This emphasis on ensuring the use of and evaluation of plans do not imply that they will be perfect prescriptions which must be followed without question. In fact, it is because plans do not have to be changed in the light of unpredicted and unpredictable situations that such reviews are so important. If the planning process is to be improved and made even more valuable as a management tool, the review must question why unpredicted events were overlooked, why action programmes did not achieve the desired results, why apparently feasible timetables were not met, why previous longer-term forecasts were so unrealistic two years later.

Whether the whole planning approach needs modification, whether the planning system has weaknesses, or whether the people concerned are insufficiently skilled or motivated is part of the function of the review process.

SUMMARY

Only by such pressure for improvement can we ensure that the whole marketing planning activity increasingly fulfils its basic goals. It should be a highly practical, creative process which specifies that action is needed to achieve the objectives of the company via the designated strategies. It should be an integral part of the managerial function providing clear programmes for action and criteria for evaluation of both company and individual performance. Successful companies 'plan the work and work the plan' recognising that the quality of the work is improved by good planning and the quality of the planning is improved by regular assessment of the work.

Jack D. Cairns, Marketing Director, Southtek

IMPROVING YOUR I.Q. INNOVATION QUOTIENT

Professor Blaise Cronin

With your indulgence I should like to alter the title of this talk from 'Marketing for libraries: an overview' to 'Improving your I.Q. — I.Q. in this case standing for Innovation Quotient. I shall still attempt to provide the overview, but I would like to stress, in particular, the importance of continuous service refinement and innovation in relation to the so-called marketing cycle. Hence the titular change. But first let me define what it is we are talking about.

I have said it before and I shall say it again: marketing is more than anything else a management style based on a service philosophy which is:

- user/client-oriented rather than product/materials or process-oriented;
- concerned with quality rather than quantity;
- places the emphasis on effectiveness rather than efficiency;
- emphasises the benefits to be derived by the user/client rather than the intrinsic merits of the service on offer.

Within the profession there is a residual feeling that marketing is somehow inappropriate for a public service institution such as the library. This view will persist as long as there is a failure to distinguish between product-centred marketing and social marketing. Product-centred marketing aims to increase production, sales and bottom-line profitability by aggressive selling and by promoting the product as a product. Social marketing is not concerned with profit maximisation or increasing consumption at all costs, but with improving the level of user/consumer satisfaction. In the long-term an aggressive, product-centred approach to marketing can do more harm than good to an organisation's or institution's corporate image; it certainly will not win repeat business or convince the consumer that you work for an organisation which has the needs of the consumer at heart.

There are many definitions of marketing to chose from, but Philip Kotler's succinct version is as good as any. He defines marketing as 'the effective management by an organisation of its exchange relationships with its various markets and publics'.[1] When we are thinking of libraries the exchange which takes place is one of service for patronage. Elementary, but worth stating, nonetheless.

In reality the picture is a little more complicated. Marketing is a two-fold activity involving the process of resource attraction and resource allocation. Resource allocation has to do with the way in which we use available resources to achieve stated goals and objectives (i.e. prioritising services; earmarking funds for innovations etc.). At this stage we are marketing the service to our user communities. The resource attraction process, on the other hand, has to do with persuading funding authorities to make essential resources available. Here we are concerned to market ourselves and our services to those who control the purse strings. We now have a triadic relationship and a more complicated set of exchanges. Whether we are talking about public, special or academic library/information services there are relationships between users and service suppliers; funders and suppliers; and users and funders which need to be understood.

Marketing is not a fancy pseudoscience; it is not something which can be added on as an 'extra'. The concept can best be understood if we think in terms of a marketing cycle; a sequence of logically related, goal-directed analyses and actions designed to improve communication between service suppliers and users/clients.

Market-orientated planning, to borrow another of Kotler's terms, consists of three stages: *(1)* mission analysis; *(2)* market analysis; and *(3)* resource analysis, each of which requires us to answer a number of quite fundamental questions. Let me take each of these in turn.

Mission analysis:

The questions to be asked there would include the following:

- What business are we in?
- What are we trying to achieve?
- Who are our patrons/users?
- Who are our competitors?
- How will environmental changes affect our activities?

The aim at this point is to arrive at a clear, consensual statement of the library's role. Are we in the book supply business; are we an education support agency; are we in the business of social equilisation; should we function as a community information resource; should the library aim to become a communications node; are we in the business of culture provision and preservation; where do we fit in alongside other social, cultural, educational and commercial agencies; who is or might be in competition with us; do we know at which groups in the community we should target our services? These are some of the questions which start the self-inquisition on its way. Until these questions are tackled there is little point in devoting time and resources to community analysis and profiling. We must first have a sound idea what it is we wish to achieve — and why.

Market Analysis:

Phase two of the planning process involves a detailed examination of the markets we are (or would like to be) serving. Typical questions here might be:

- What is (are) our primary market(s)?
- What are the major market segments?
- What is known about users, non-users, lapsed users, potential users?
- What socio-economic, demographic, psychographic data are available on different sub-groups within the community served?
- How might our markets change in the short, medium and long term futures?
- What are the needs (expressed and unexpressed) of our various markets?
- How does the public see us *vis a vis* our 'competitors'?
- What is the library's public image?
- What benefits might our users be expected to derive from the services on offer?
- What do we know about customer satisfaction levels?

These questions are designed to amplify, confirm or overturn our impressions and intuitions

about our user populations. The intention is to identify and define the market before segmenting it into homogeneous sub-groups, characterised either in terms of shared features (e.g. social class; terminal education age), lifestyle similarities or benefits being sought. The final stage is that of market positioning, i.e. selecting a mix of target groups which is matched to the operating capabilities of the library service and whose needs are not already serviced or satisfied by other commercial or not-for-profit agencies (e.g. bookshops, information brokers, online vendors, subscription libraries, local authority information services, citizens advice bureaux, public information utilities etc.)

Resource analysis:

Having decided what is is we wish to accomplish (and for whom), the next step is to review existing services, products and facilities with a view to changing, refining or expanding what is already in place. This time the questions to be posed would include the following:

- What are our major strengths and weaknesses?
- Is the 'product mix' correct?
- Should we diversify or rationalise?
- What new services could or should be offered?
- What are the cost implications of new product development and service innovation?
- What services do users want which are not currently available?
- What are the implications regarding staffing (and staff training) as a result of proposed changes to existing services and operations?

Libraries, and here I am thinking of public libraries, are what might be termed multiple goal coalitions. Simply put, they are providers of educational, information, cultural, recreational and even quasi-social services to a heterogeneous client population. There is no logically compelling reason why these various activities should be the responsibility of a single local authority institution. The 'product mix' of many contemporary public libraries is extremely broad and deep. The range of materials (books, computer software, journals, newspapers, directories, information, games, adult literacy materials, films, cassettes, videos, records etc.) is expanding rather than contracting, and new services (e.g. online information retrieval services for industry; Kurzweil reading machines for the blind) are being introduced at a time of public expenditure cut-backs.

The matter of an unwieldy product mix is much more of a headache for public as opposed to, say, special libraries. Special libraries and technical information centres tend to have a clear remit, a specific subject area to cover and a finite (captive) user population to serve. Public libraries, by way of contrast, seek to be 'all things to all men' (the multiple goal syndrome) and thus are overstretched. Fewer resources, more services, higher operating costs, fewer staff, rising demand and increasing user expectations together constitute an increasingly common picture.

It is an easy matter to illustrate the complexity of the product mix by projecting different service elements (e.g. educational support; business information; lending) onto a two dimensional space. The horizontal axis might be labelled for-profit/not-for-profit; the vertical axis proactive/reactive, indicating the emphasis (or lack of) placed on positive 'selling' of the service. There is, of course, no reason why these axes should not be labelled otherwise, but the point of this is simply to show how different facets of the overall service are scattered and in some cases apparently unconnected when positioned in conceptual space.

Until now public libraries have tried as far as possible to satisfy the multifarious needs of their horizontal markets (laymen, businessmen, those in education etc.), while at the same time offering various levels of service to each of their vertical markets. All in all, public libraries maintain a very ambitious product range and seem to aspire to be knowledge supermarkets. I have my doubts whether this approach (laudable though it may be) can continue indefinitely. Some sort of reappraisal or rationalisation seems to be required. The three stage approach I outlined a few moments ago (market, mission and resource analysis) can help clarify matters. More specifically, there may be some advantage in applying a structured approach, which focuses on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Academic libraries (more specifically, university libraries) are also dealing with a polyglot user population and are confronted with the problem of delivering various kinds and levels of services to different sub-groups. However, at the risk of generalising, it sometimes seems to me that academic libraries choose to offer a 'prix fixe' rather than an 'a la carte' menu of services to their users. Their fondness for massification and centralisation has perhaps been a barrier to the development of truly flexible and targeted services. From a marketing point of view, academic libraries could learn a thing or two from their special library counterparts.

Most textbooks on marketing make reference to the four Ps of marketing — product, price, place and promotion. I have already said something about the assortment of products/services on offer and the need for a review of the product mix to ensure that a socially appropriate melange is achieved.

Of the four Ps the one which at first glance has least to do with public sector libraries is 'price', for the simple reason that these services do not as a rule impose charges. In both the US and the UK there is strong professional resistance to the idea of levying charges, though in Britain libraries may under the terms of the 1964 Public Libraries & Museums Act impose charges for materials 'beyond those normally provided', which in practice means such things as records, cassettes, computer games and videos. However, these and other revenue earning options exercised by public libraries add relatively little to the overall operating budget.

The commercialisation of information (a recent phenomenon) has created a new set of problems for public sector libraries. Information is business — big business — and the character of the information marketplace has changed radically in recent years. As more information (particularly information to which value has been added) is made available in electronic form, library budgets will come under additional pressure. The question of tariffs will have to be reviewed and difficult choices made.

Online searching highlights the difficulties facing public sector libraries. Most librarians would wish to make online information retrieval available to a wider market, but the direct costs involved mean that limitations on use have to be applied in practice. As more and more information becomes available in electronic form, libraries will have to make a choice: *(a)* - find extra funds to cover the additional, visible costs of electronic information provision (unlikely in the present economic climate) *(b)* siphon funds from another budget heading (painfully); *(c)* simply bow out of the electronic information marketplace (undesirable); or *(d)* devise novel means of revenue-generation (possible, but relatively untried other than on a limited scale).

Charging can be blanket, differentiated or discretionary in character. Not everyone need pay; not everyone should be expected to pay; not everyone, for that matter, will want to use or gain access to expensive information services. Careful tradeoff and competitor analysis will be needed before pricing strategies are determined. There are many options: direct cost pricing;

full-cost pricing; demand-based pricing; value-based pricing; competitive pricing; loss-leading pricing; marginal cost pricing. If libraries are to function as information access channels for the ordinary citizen there may well have to be curtailments in traditional services and/or the introduction of selective charging, based upon careful analysis of local needs and conditions.

Place (the third P in the quartet) relates to the distribution mechanisms and outlets used by an organisation to bring its services/products to its various markets and publics. As a general rule the patron/user comes to the library to acquire information, consult materials or interact with subject specialists among the staff. There are strong historical precedents for this (largely) one-way flow. Administratively it is appealing to have stock centralised (the university library tower block is a good illustration of this tendency, as indeed are the large metropolitan reference libraries to be found in our major centres of industry and commerce). It is also financially appealing for the number of service outlets to be kept to a minimum (even though this may not best serve the interests of the user).

We know a considerable amount about the factors associated with the use and non-use of libraries and information services. It has been established that location, accessibility, atmospherics and so on all play a part in shaping user behaviours and attitudes. Increasingly, efforts are being made to reach out to those who are geographically or physically handicapped by improving the siting of branch and satellite libraries, by increasing the number and frequency of mobile deliveries, and by setting up off-site collections in day centres, sheltered housing complexes, community information centres, local clubs, associations, schools, prisons etc.

But it is not merely a matter of creating more flexible structures or increasing the number of deposit collections; today's technology has the potential to revolutionise the information delivery process by bringing the library and the remote user into direct contact. Online public access catalogues (Opac's) could be accessed from the user's doorstep. Likewise, information once selected, could be delivered by the library to the user's doorstep. Likewise, information could be transmitted in digitised form, downloaded from the library's own in-house database, or sent by facsimile without the user (academic staff member or student) having to leave his armchair.

Of course there is no reason why the user should not bypass the library altogether, and having once identified relevant references or full-text segments from online databases place an order for the corresponding documents to be delivered electronically to his office or living room. However, discussion of this kind takes us beyond the concept of place and back to considerations of future trends, market positioning and competitor assessment.

Much of what I have been saying will also apply in the case of special libraries — in particular industrial information units. As organisations link into local and wide-area networks, provide professional and scientific end-users with dedicated terminals, and increase the amount of information (both internally and externally generated) available electronically for distributed processing, the role of the information scientist will perforce change. In some cases information specialists may be linked to particular project teams of matrix management groups; in some cases they may take on a general advisory role for corporate information planning, and in many cases will aim to identify new services and facilities for their user populations. There will also be a stronger emphasis on anticipating future user needs, identifying opportunities for new product/service development, and on providing services and support for groups not traditionally catered for by the information services department.

And so to the fourth P — promotion. There is little point in conducting market research

studies, community profiling exercises or whatever, if the changes and improvements we institute are not announced to the publics for whom they are intended. Promotion is an umbrella term embracing publicity, advertising and public relations. Local circumstances, budgets and staff attitudes will determine the mix to be used, but the range of options available is wide and includes direct mail shots, posters, display advertising in newspapers and magazines, media spots (on TV, radio or local cable TV), sponsored events, presentations and demonstrations for target groups (e.g. online searching for local businessmen, academic administrators etc.), user education programmes, tape/slide or computer-based orientation programs, friends of the library groups, book sales, open days, the development of a housestyle, and much more besides.

On a more general level it is important to work with and through the local community, establishing contacts with opinion leaders, 'power brokers', civic dignitaries and grassroots organisations. It can also be advantageous (at least in the case of public libraries) to provide customised information services for locally elected politicians within the community and for different departments (e.g. planning and architecture) within the local authority or administrative unit. The same logic and strategy could be used by academic librarians, whose services and expertise are, arguably, underutilised by senior administrative officers within their parent institutions. On a more general level still, it is essential to convince key constituencies of the social, personal and commercial value of information, and to lobby forcefully and cogently on behalf of the library in order to maintain existing levels of funding at a time of financial stringency.

I should also like to add three words of warning at this juncture. First, never promise what cannot in fact be provided. If a particular service or facility is to be singled out for intensive promotion ensure that the service matches up to the claims made on its behalf. Second, remember that successful service re-organisation and promotion may stimulate demand to an unmanageable level, such that staff become overburdened and users disappointed with the modal quality of service. And third, no matter how good or sleek the service, it is advisable to promote the service in terms of the benefits it offers to individuals or groups of users, rather than in terms of its intrinsic merit or value. Benefit segmentation is a much more effective technique than the so-called 'shot-gun' approach which tries to promote all aspects of the service to everyone in like manner. The extra effort needed to design 'rifle shot' promotions will pay off in the long run.

The expression 'product life cycle' is frequently encountered in the marketing literature, and refers to the fact that a product, once successfully launched onto the market, exhibits a more or less predictable pattern of growth, maturity and eventual decline. Like fashions or ideas, products come and products go. Often, though, it can be more helpful to talk in terms of a multiple life cycle. The Rolls Royce Corniche model of today is a different product from the Silver Cloud of yesteryear, but it is more meaningful to think in terms of successive sophistication: of a core product (the Rolls Royce) with multiple life cycles (corresponding to each replacement model). With this in mind it can be instructive to look at the range of services, products and facilities offered by libraries in terms of the life-cycle concept.

I presented a conference paper some four years ago in which I suggested looking at the public library movement in the UK in terms of the product life cycle curve.[2] I took as my starting point the year 1850 (the period around which legislation was first enacted), argued that the expansionist years of the 1960s (when, according to the then prime minister Harold Macmillan, 'we never had it so good') represented the maturity phase of the curve, and concluded that the recessionary eighties (and nineties) would correspond to the period of decline. Needless to say, one could in all probability marshall statistics which would suggest that I am

talking absolute nonsense, but if the present sombre mood of the profession is anything to go by, then this is not entirely fanciful. For this reason, we ought to ask what developments, trends, pressures and innovations will provide the necessary regenerative thrust.

There is, of course, no one correct answer. We can but speculate. However, if there is to be a period of renewed growth, the profession will have to identify new opportunities, new areas for colonisation, new services, new delivery mechanisms and new products. And this, of course, takes us right back to the mission analysis stage. Indeed, it takes me right back to the reasons for changing the title of this paper — for stressing the importance of encouraging, facilitating and accelerating innovation within professional practice.

To suggest that libraries could adopt a more business-like approach to the marketing of their services is not to say that they should become business operations: merely that they should learn from the experiences of the commercial sector. For instance, there is a wide variety of tried and tested techniques and structures (synectics, to use the jargon) which can increase the probability of success in developing innovations and creative group thinking.[3] Libraries have rich resources at their disposal: prime sites; special (and sometime) unique collections; archival and local history materials; databases; and highly marketable professional skills. They have one other asset that many businesses lack, namely, the goodwill and respect of the community at large.

Libraries of all kinds should be more prepared to conduct 'innovation audits', market analyses, customer satisfaction surveys, and keener to explore the possibilities for collaborative ventures with the private sector. It will not do to claim that librarians have unique professional skills; that they have a pedigree in the information handling business which sets them apart from their commercial counterparts, or that they should be accorded the role of society's appointed information managers. Claims of these kinds need to be backed up by substantive justifications — evidence that there is a special niche for the profession and that the particular skills of its members have a distinct and socially useful contribution to make.

These observations apply (to some extent, at least) to other professional bodies — the legal profession being a case in point. The thinking of the 1980s is characterised by a suspicion of cartels, monopolies, closed shops and professions. Restrictive practices are being challenged, and professional bodies (whatever their standing) will increasingly have to justify themselves on the quality and marketability of their specialist services and skills.

Marketing, to conclude, is much more than a fringe or one-time-only activity; it is fundamental to what we do. It has to do with asking basic questions about purpose, intention and activity in respect of the consumers (potential or actual) of the services we offer, or would like to offer. Marketing is a continuous process (hence the term 'marketing cycle'), which entails ongoing programme evaluation. Our user communities are not static; they are dynamic. Their needs, wants and expectations are modulated by events in the external environment and changes in the social climate. A responsive library service must be attuned to current moods and sensitive to imminent social, economic and technological change if it is to remain credible. Marketing is the means we have of tuning into these wavebands and keeping one step ahead.

Professor Blaise Cronin, Department of Information Science Strathclyde Business School, University of Strathclyde.

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